depreciation at the rate of 50%. Cost of machinery has also been reduced through Fiscal Policy measures. This further encourages modernisation.

(iv) With a view to making fabric production competitive, the custom duty on shuttless looms has been brought from 15% to 5%.

(v) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.

(vi) Facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories have been created to enable exporters to get the garments/textiles pre-tested for conforming to the requirements of importing countries.

(vii) The Government has launched a centrally sponsored scheme titled "Apparel Park for Export Scheme" for imparting focused thrust for setting up of apparel manufacturing units of international standards at potential growth centres and to give fillip to exports.

(viii) For upgrading infrastructure facilities at important textile centers, a scheme " Textile Centre Infrastructure Development Scheme" (TCIDS) has been launched.

(d) The Government is already pursuing a Policy of de-regulation and de-control and would make legislative proposals, if and when required, to meet the emerging situation.

Import of Silk

935. PROF. M.M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of silk imported in the country during the last three years;

(b) the amount of foreign exchange spent on the import of silk; and

(c) the details of schemes formulated by Government so far to stop the increasing import of silk and to produce it in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The details of quantum of silk imported in the country and amount of foreign exchange spent on import of silk during the last three years are as under:—

Year	Quantity (M. Tons)	Value (Rs. Crores)	Value (Mn. US$)
2000-01	4713	475.14	104.01
2001-02	6808	624.73	131.14
2002-03 (Provisional)	8987	633.13	130.84

(c) (1) The main programmes being undertaken by the Government under the X Plan to check imports and increase silk production in the country include:

(i) Research and Technological efforts of Central Silk Board for improving the qualitative and quantitative cocoon/raw silk production by evolution of more productive and stress tolerant breeds and hybrids of mulberry and non-mulberry varieties of food plant and silkworm, adoption of integrated eco-friendly approach for pest and disease management, upgradation of reeling and processing technologies in silk;

(ii) Seed Support & Technical Assistance by the Central Silk Board to State Governments, farmers & reelers by maintenance of parent races and basic seed, supply of commercial seed support and augmentation of grainage facilities for production of disease free high yielding and drought resistant seeds;

(iii) Central assistance to states through Centrally Sponsored & Central sector schemes to strengthen farm infrasturcture, increase area under sericulture, upgrade reeling facilities, improve finishing processes, strengthen seed supply, cotton & silk testing systems, in all four varieties of silk;

(iv) Popularisation and transfer of technologies developed to the field through the States' extension machinery, training to the beneficiaries, organizing various awareness programmes, etc;

(v) Under the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) of the Ministry of Rural Development financial assistance is being provided to various States for implementation of sericulture projects of all varieties of silk with the technical assistance of CSB:

(vi) Establishing vertical linkages between the raw silk producers and the industry; and

(vii) Establishing quality certification systems for silkworm seeds, cocoons, yarn and fabric.

(2) Anti-dumping duty @ US$ 27.97 per kg has been imposed with effect from January 2003 on all imports of mulberry raw silk (not thrown), of international grade 2A and below, originating in or exported from the People's Republic of China.

Hike in the Textile Import quota for India by EU

936. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the EU decision to hike the textile imports quota for India will facilitate increase in our exports to these countries in terms of our earnings in Dollars;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an appreciating rupee is likely to affect competitiveness of our textile exports; and

(d) whether cheaper dollar will make import of superior cotton varities more attractive and make value added textiles more competitive?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b) The European Union has not announced any special textile quotas for India, and hence the question of its impact on our export earnings do not arise.

(c) The trade does feel that the appreciation of Rupee will affect their competitiveness adversely. However, despite the appreciation of Rupee against US Dollar, the value of merchandise exports (in Dollar terms) during the period April-May, 2003 increased by 11.12% over the corresponding period of 2002.

(d) As the import intensity of our textile export products is very low, the cheaper dollar may only have a marginal effect on the competitiveness of our value added textiles.